

Northgate Stakeholders Group Options for the Future

1. INTRODUCTION

At the May 9, 2006 Northgate Stakeholders Group meeting, City of Seattle staff identified a number of important new projects that are in various stages of planning at Northgate. These are in addition to the significant projects Stakeholders have already considered, provided their advice to the City, and plan to monitor as they are implemented.

Members of the Stakeholders Group discussed future possibilities, possible modes of engagement, and agreed to be interviewed about the future options. Triangle Associates contacted a representative of each seat to ask for their suggestions for how Stakeholders can remain engaged in the future and agreed to report the results at the June 27 meeting. Triangle sent the interview questions to the Stakeholders in advance by email and contacted them to ask for their responses. Representatives of 21 of the 22 seats at the table responded. (Only the youth seat representative was not interviewed because the current representative had not yet attended any meetings.) Vicki King of Triangle Associates talked by phone to representatives of all but one seat who sent responses by email.

2. FINDINGS

This report presents the input from those interviews and offers options for Stakeholders to consider in how they provide input in the future.

A key finding of the interviews is that Stakeholders want to remain engaged to

- **Ensure that Stakeholder advice continues to influence how projects at Northgate are designed and implemented and**
- **Be informed about and to have the opportunity to comment on/influence future projects in the Northgate area.**

Structure for the Future

There was overwhelming agreement that the current Stakeholders Group structure, while not perfect, has functioned very well. No alternative approach was suggested.

- Strengths of the Stakeholders Group process identified during the interviews include the following:
 - Representation of all the major interests at Northgate; all have a voice.
 - Providing a “continuous flow of balanced input” to the City on important issues at Northgate
 - Effectiveness in getting things accomplished in a relatively short period of time that have not been able to be done in 10-15 years.

- Having City staff at meetings to provide necessary information so the Stakeholders could deliberate and provide their advice
- Influencing projects developers have brought to the Group in ways that will make them work better for the whole community
- Subcommittees were universally popular and praised for allowing members to delve into issues in greater depth, providing adequate time for participants to discuss issues, and developing options for the Stakeholders to consider at their next meeting
- Reports from Jackie Kirn, which have been effective at keeping Stakeholders abreast of a wide range of projects and issues at Northgate
- Changes Stakeholders would like to see in the future
 - Fewer meetings
 - Shorter meetings
 - More time for Stakeholder discussion at meetings, perhaps by limiting the number of topics at each meeting and/or by allocating half of the time for any agenda item to discussion and the remaining half to presentation

Frequency of Meetings

Most Stakeholders say that three to four meetings a year should be adequate. Setting a schedule of meetings a year in advance will get dates on member calendars and make it more likely they can attend

Most Stakeholders like two additional options:

- convening an “as needed” meeting if a major issue arises that does not fit with scheduled meetings and
- canceling a meeting if not needed.

Community Forums

Stakeholders believe that Community Forums are valuable to share information. They recommend holding them once or twice a year so the entire Northgate community can remain abreast of developments and have an opportunity to provide their ideas, comments and suggestions.

However, most Stakeholders believe the Stakeholders Group, which allows the broad array of interests represented on the group to have focused discussion on specific issues/projects, has a different purpose than the Community Forums. They do not favor coordinating Community Forms with Stakeholders Group meetings. Holding both meetings on a single day is seen as requiring too great a commitment of time in a single day.

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

Stakeholders want to know what is happening at Northgate. Suggestions for keeping up in the face of fewer meetings include the following:

- Use email; for example, send regular editions of the reports from Jackie Kirn to Stakeholders electronically

- Update the Northgate website at DPD often and send notices to Stakeholders *and* their constituent groups when updates occur
- Send materials via snail mail.

Continued Participation

With the exception of one seat, Stakeholders say they think it is important to have their respective constituents represented as part of a group that provides input to the City. Two current participants said they did not want to remain on the group.

Ron LaFayette's Proposal

Ron Lafayette proposes that Stakeholders have an annual scoping meeting in the fall to look ahead at the coming year. In advance of this annual scoping meeting, “leads” for issues, such as CTIP, would meet with the Chair and Vice Chair and City staff to give an assessment of their expected work, if any, for the year. They would present their agendas and needs at the annual meeting as input into the annual schedule and workplan. Stakeholders would use this input to determine how many meetings to hold and on what topics.